

THE JEWS

By HILAIRE BELLOC



INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER TO
THE THIRD EDITION

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THE JEWS

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To

MISS RUBY GOLDSMITH

MY SECRETARY FOR MANY YEARS AT KING'S
LAND AND THE BEST AND MOST INTIMATE OF
OUR JEWISH FRIENDS, TO WHOM MY
FAMILY AND I WILL ALWAYS OWE
A DEEP DEBT OF GRATITUDE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

AN ESSAY ON THE NATURE
OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLAND

EUROPE AND THE FAITH

THE CRUISE OF THE "NONA "

THE SERVILE STATE

BELINDA

THE OLD ROAD

CONSTABLE LONDON

THE JEWS

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שלום לישראל

THIRD EDITION

With a new Introductory Chapter

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WHEN this book was first published fifteen years ago, the things it had to say were new to the English public. The Jewish question had never been properly discussed or understood. For most people it did not exist.

This was less true of the English-speaking world as a whole. In the United States, and particularly in the town of New York, the Jewish question was ever present and at times acute; but it had not reached either in scope or intensity the position it has achieved to-day. Being on a new subject and one, in England at least, so unfamiliar, it is remarkable that a new edition was called for in half a dozen years. The time lag between the day when matters of high public importance are first heard and the general discussion of them, even on a small scale, is set going, is usually a good deal longer than that; especially where, as in this case, the Press is concerned (through its dependance on Commercial advertisement) to say as little about it as possible.

Now that a third edition is called for, nine years later, we are in a different world so far as the Jewish question is concerned. Three things of first-class magnitude have changed everything and have aroused universal interest

on the subject here discussed. That interest may increase until it breeds something much graver than mere debate.

These three things which have of late accentuated the Jewish question are, first, the advance of the European Revolution by the recent great and definite stage it has taken since it was launched with the enormous massacres in Russia twenty years ago. The Revolution has obtained power in Spain, holds nearly half that country and is there fighting desperately to extend its power. As continental writers have recently put it, "The conflagration has now caught on at *both* ends of Europe." Moscow is in power at Valencia, at Barcelona and (though precariously) at Madrid.

The second thing is the violent reaction against the European Revolution of the government of Berlin, with the consequent exile and persecution of Jews throughout the German Reich. It is now over four years since this completely new departure in European politics began and there has been time to appreciate the first of its effects.

The third thing is the maturing of the Zionist experiment in Palestine.

This last is not of sudden or recent appearance like the first two. The Zionist experiment has been passing through gradual growth for many years. It has been present in the minds of men ever since the Great War, and the idea behind it has been present for a life-time. What is of actual and immediate importance therein is not the idea, still less the name, but the high stage of development which it has reached. For twenty years, ever since the Balfour Declaration was first made, the

policy of the Zionists has been in action. For fifteen or sixteen years it has consolidated and taken root. But it was not until the new Prussian policy, attacking the Jewish race as a whole, was launched that Zionism entered what may be called "the acute phase," and it was not till the Arab revolt of 1935-6 that the West in general and England in particular began to understand how serious the business was.

These three things taken together open a new chapter in the discussion of that great problem with which the future will be necessarily occupied: *the problem of settling the Jewish question in justice and peace.*

If that problem is not so solved the fault will be ours, it will not be that of the Jews. That it can be solved and permanently solved in only one fashion, is the thesis of this book. That there is a new development through the three things here set down, is now so clear to everybody that we can grasp the practical points of future policy more firmly and in more detail.

The cry "I told you so" is futile, but the drawing of lessons from experience is the very opposite of futility, it is the most valuable form of constructive political thought. If you warn a man who cannot read, that a board marked "danger" on a frozen pond means thin ice, and that its neighbourhood should be avoided, then, if the poor fellow falls through, to say "I told you so" when he is dragged out dripping to the bank, leads nowhere except to his exasperation and to the satisfaction of one's own vanity. But if, after the event, you can convince him by this experience that these six odd marks which he did not understand and

neglected—D, A, N, G, E, R—mean “look out! Thin Ice!” then you have done something constructive. If ever the cry, “I told you so” was well founded, it was so founded in the case of this book, but the book will do no good unless its argument is understood.

The peculiar and universal danger of Communism working from Moscow, its character and its intensity, has been lit up under the fierce glare of the fires consuming shrines and churches throughout Spain. It has been emphasized by the murder of religion in as much of that unhappy country as was seized by the revolutionaries.

Jews as such are not Communists, but the modern Communist movement was inspired and is directed by Jews. That is why the term “Jewish Communism” is heard everywhere in conversation, though not in the Press; the Revolution now advancing in Europe is a part of the Jewish problem.

My original statement that it would prove impossible to prolong the silly pretence that no Jewish question exists, and that ignoring it would lead to an explosion at some point, has been amply illustrated in the case of Germany.

The judgment that the Zionist experiment must at last prove unstable and would clamour for readjustment has become equally plain.

In each of these typical fields a new departure has begun and a new stage of development has been reached in a struggle which will soon preoccupy the whole world. No limit has as yet been set to the progress made by the Revolution, by the German persecution of the Jews,

or by the reaction against Zionism; each of the three curves is still rising, but we are already now, in 1937, at a point on each of the three curves where their formulae can be set down and their probable future course plotted out: the immediate past has, by this time, afforded enough evidence for such conclusions.

I therefore take each of these three main forms of what is at root the same problem and examine them separately in their order:

First, the nature and progress of the Revolution at work throughout our culture and inspired by Jewish Communism.

Next, the active opposition to Jewish power, the "counter-offensive" as they call it, which has been launched by Berlin.

Lastly, the business of Palestine.

The nature of the conflict in Spain and how and why it is a branch of that general revolutionary movement called Jewish Communism must first be appreciated.

The original revolution in Moscow set out to destroy Capitalism.

The reasons which made that task appeal to the Jewish temperament in general and to the Russian Jews in particular have been set out in this book and need no repetition. The reasons that made Spain their next field of action, after their attempt to work through Central Europe had broken down, do need explanation because they are thoroughly misunderstood. Spain is a long way from Russia; the Spanish temperament in all its forms differs more from the Russian temperament than any other in Christendom. The Spaniard

—Castilian, Andalusian, Galician, even Catalanian—is intensely personal. The theory or philosophy of Communism could never be accepted by the mass of the Spanish people as it might be by the mass of the Russian people. The positive side of Jewish Communism as expressed by Mordecai himself (Marx) and by all the other exponents of it, Jew and Gentile, is their insistence on the control of the means of production, distribution and exchange, by officials of the community—which turn out in practice to be in large proportion Jewish. The exploitation of the poor by the rich is thus destroyed and on the supposition that the officials of the community will be full of justice and charity every one of the community will receive his due share of the produce proceeding from the State machine.

Everyone will also be a slave of the State ; but as the proletarian worker under Capitalism is almost a slave already, he gains by the change. His life under Communism is even more controlled by the will of other men than under Capitalism, but he is free from the anxiety of unemployment and (in theory at least) entitled to the full results of his labour.

With that positive side of Communism, I say, the Spaniard had no sympathy whatever. You can find a few real communists up and down Spain, but they are for the most part intellectuals of the common middle-class type which you may find everywhere : academic theorizers at the best and adventurers at the worst. The new Communism, however, proceeding from Moscow had another side, quite different from the positive one. This other side may by courtesy be called the

negative side, for it did not directly point towards the establishment of Communism. But it certainly had highly positive characteristics of its own.

It insisted on "liquidating" those who had inherited or acquired the habit of control under the old Christian society: not only those who were themselves in possession of machinery and lands and reserves of necessities—not only capitalists, that is—but all educated men who, though themselves proletarian and possessed of nothing, sympathized with the traditions of Christian society; for these traditions include the right to property and the independance of the family. It was necessary to "liquidate" these people, and further to "liquidate" more particularly and more thoroughly those who passed on the tradition of the Christian religion. The simplest form of "liquidation" was murder, and under the inspiration of Communism we saw murder on a scale hitherto unknown even during the invasions of the pagan Mongols. Priests by tens of thousands, the owners of wealth in every kind, the adherents to old traditions in every form, were massacred wherever the new fury could strike.

Moreover, Communism declared itself not only atheist but materialist in its atheism. It declared quite accurately and logically that its prime enemy was the Christian religion.

Now Spain was a country in which the exploitation of the poor by the rich, such as takes place under Capitalism, was more intensely resented by the victims of that system than anywhere else in Europe. The mass of Spain is agricultural, and much of the agri-

cultural population had either security of tenure or actual possession of land sufficient to establish a just and contented society. But there were great patches which were exceptional. In the South, that is in Andalusia, the mediaeval arrangements of village life from which all the better traditions of Christendom descend were not present. The land reconquered from the Moors at the end of the Christian advance against them during the last century of the Middle Ages was confiscated to the Crowns of the conquerors, as was the universal custom with land redeemed from Pagan or Mahommedan invaders; but it was not redistributed to the peasantry. It was given in huge estates to great nobles and other favourites. The actual tillers of the soil remained amongst the poorest in Europe. In Andalusia therefore there was a widespread feeling of popular enmity against the wealthier classes. But that had little to do with the opportunity which other parts of Spanish society offered to revolutionary propaganda. The core of that opportunity was the intense feeling of the Spanish proletariat in the large towns, especially where these towns had been industrialized. Nowhere was it felt more violently than in Barcelona. Anyone who has mixed with the people of that port, and has seen the workers in its factories during the last thirty years, can testify to the intensity of the rising popular anger against industrial conditions. Those who were ready to go to all lengths in order to end those conditions by violence were a minority, and not a large minority, but they were exceedingly courageous, thoroughly determined, and inspired by the fullest hate. They were

naturally to be found mainly among the younger men of the industrial proletariat, but they had sympathizers outside that class.

Meanwhile, there was a hatred of the Church as violent as, or more violent than, the hatred of the rich and of the system whereby the rich were supported. This hatred of the Church was not due, as foreigners have ignorantly and even stupidly supposed, to the wealth of the Church: the Spanish parish clergy were among the poorest in Europe, and anyone who will go carefully over the list of those known to have been murdered will satisfy himself that envy of wealth had nothing to do with the crimes. Half the priests of Spain have been savagely put to death by the revolutionaries, and very few of them could have known from one day to another where to find £10. Humble village priests, sprung from the people, indistinguishable in manners and speech from the peasants around them and less endowed with goods than any other class in the country, were the specially chosen victims.

Here again it was a minority, as might be expected, that committed such shocking crimes. The bulk of the population, even in great towns, were churchgoing Catholics. This was manifest in Barcelona, though Barcelona was the very focus of the revolution. But the Church was associated in the minds of the revolutionaries with the best of all the traditions they were determined to destroy.

At this point let it be carefully noted and fixed in the reader's mind that the Spanish conflict is essentially a religious war. It does not call itself such. The

superficial foreign observer, especially if he be from a country where Catholicism is virtually unknown to the mass of men, may well think the other elements in the struggle to be of greater importance, and particularly the struggle between Capital and Labour. But in all its manifestations of active hatred, especially its organizing of murder, Communism in Spain since the outbreak of the revolution has been specially and particularly anti-Christian.

In that part of Spanish territory still in the hands of the revolutionaries it has been impossible to practise religion, or to teach religion to the young. What is more, implements and symbols of religion were systematically destroyed wholesale because the Revolutionaries judged, quite rightly, that symbols are a support to Religion. They are also proofs of its presence. In a great many cases the possession of a crucifix or a rosary was a death-warrant.

When the organized reaction against this outburst of anarchy and murder arose under the conduct of General Franco, it seemed at first as though Madrid wherein the gold of the country was amassed—particularly in the Bank of Spain—would be seized by the insurgents. Madrid was saved from capture by something which thenceforward dominated the situation—foreign intervention. The Communist Government of Russia began to pour in munitions of war through the eastern ports which were under the control of revolutionary bodies, principally composed of young men and most of them Anarchists. With the Anarchists, Moscow Communism was not in great sympathy. They would be a disturbing

factor. But anything was thought by Moscow worthy of support which helped to destroy Christian Spain.

The young revolutionaries, both the comparatively small body within Madrid itself and the much larger bodies from the eastern seaboard, were enrolled as militia, so were the men let loose from the gaols, and almost anyone who cared to join for such pay as the revolutionary government could offer.

The courage of these irregular troops was very fine but their lack of discipline was hopeless, and the insurgent aircraft could drive the militiamen out of their badly made trenches almost at will. The advance on Madrid from the South was so rapid that the centre of the town would certainly have been reached in the first continuous movement had it not been necessary to rescue the Army cadets who were holding out against the revolutionaries at Toledo, in the military school of that town, which was also the old castle, the Alcazar. This deflection from Franco's main purpose gave the revolutionary government time to bring up tanks—not of the first quality, but sufficient for the purpose and provided by Moscow. The advance was checked and the penetration of the town of Madrid never got beyond the outskirts.

Thence onwards masses of munitionment and men began to reach the revolutionary side in all manner of ways. The revolutionaries having seized the gold of the country—about 130 millions (probably more counting private sources)—they spent it wholesale, buying up out-of-works in the Southern French towns and elsewhere. They also bought up at a very high price, for

it was risky work, pilots and machines for air fighting. Meanwhile, the French Government was secretly conniving at the passage of French aeroplanes over the Pyrenees.

Franco and his insurgents were also receiving reinforcements; not of course on the same scale as their opponents, and this for two reasons. First, because it was more difficult to reach them with the French Government hostile to the insurgent cause and with only one port at their disposal, that of Cadiz; secondly, because they had been better equipped at the beginning of their movement than had the ramshackle and ill-organized revolutionary herd calling itself "the Government forces" (often known in this country as "constitutional"—the most comic epithet which under the circumstances could have been applied).

Soon a certain number of German experts, especially expert organizers of flying work and a certain number of German pilots and machines, and another contingent of Italian engineers and machines appeared on the insurgent side. The numbers thus contributed have never been accurately ascertained. They were probably more than 8,000 men and less than 10,000, so far as ground work was concerned: they were all volunteers, but their volunteering was winked at by the authorities of the countries from which they came. On the revolutionary side far larger numbers of hired mercenaries but also young foreign revolutionaries, filled with a genuine enthusiasm for the Anarchist or Communist cause, as the case might be, came flooding into Eastern Spain, organized their International Brigade, and soon

became the best disciplined and (for a long time) the only serious fighting force which Franco had to meet.

Transformed thus during the last few months, this condition of affairs has, to use a metaphor taken from the Great War, "crystallized." Reinforcements in men and material continue to reach both sides, but the revolutionary side is more constantly supplied than the other. On the other hand, that half of the Spanish navy which joined the revolutionaries became incompetent through the murder of its officers, and the other half which joined the nationalists or insurgent anti-revolutionaries could have some effect, though not a very great one, in checking the support of the Reds from outside.

We are now, after the first completed year of the war, in the following situation. The port of Bilbao and its iron supplies (which had been seized by the revolutionaries, aided by a minority of the Basques) has been captured after prolonged efforts by Franco and through it he can receive supplies. Malaga also has been restored to normal government and the revolutionaries who had seized the town have been driven out. For some months the Great Powers have played insincerely at confining the conflict to Spain and at preventing foreign intervention. But their motives are all at cross purposes and therefore no serious plan has been carried out. The obvious policy for England is to keep Spain as weak as possible and to prevent the highly centralized and disciplined new Italian Power from establishing itself further in the Western Mediterranean. England is therefore interested in two main points of policy—preventing the

outbreak of a European war which would be fatal to her, and keeping Spain weak and divided as long as possible. For Spain to be reunited under a strong government such as Franco proposes, would be a grave menace to English power in the Mediterranean. For Italian influence to dominate in Spain, and particularly in the Balearics, would be even worse for this country.

The Government at Berlin is sincerely occupied with fighting a European revolution. It has no local purpose to serve but it sympathizes with the anti-revolutionary Italian Government in all its aims.

The Portuguese coast, which is of the highest value for supplies to Franco, is under the efficient administration of a strong, centralized government after the Italian model, presided over by a character worthy of his task, utterly indifferent to private gain or any personal advantage but dominantly anti-revolutionary.

The French situation is divided, and the division is almost as comic in its irony as the results may be tragic in their effect. The major part of the professional politicians (who are the curse of modern France and have brought her to her present weakness) are on the revolutionary side, and it is they who, so far as they can and dare, supply the new aircraft which is the chief weapon of the Reds. The motive of these politicians in this, as in everything they do, is personal. The support of the small Communist minority in France (one-sixth of the voting is nominally Communist and perhaps one-twelfth sincerely so) is necessary to keep the politicians in the saddle. The intensely anti-Catholic organization of the Radical party and the less violent

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but better disciplined Socialist party are on the same side as the Communists. These between them constitute that "popular front" in France which was organized from Moscow some months ago.

This meaningless and silly phrase "popular front" has caught on with the wire-pullers of political committees, but corresponds in no way to the nation. The French nation as a whole is determined above all things to prevent the war spreading. On the other hand, it is suspicious of any increase of German power and has an hereditary reaction against despotic government. It is to be remarked that the directing part of the French army is preoccupied with the importance of preventing any increase in German power. Thus there is in France a double confused current of opinion, of which the revolutionary side in Spain can take advantage. On the other hand the French politicians cannot go beyond a certain point in their secret support of the Spanish Reds, because they know that an outbreak of war in which France was involved would be an end not only of their lucrative careers but of their lives. (The French Government in its present deplorable phase has been well described as "Politicians on the make, restrained by their terror of the people.")

A very important feature in any estimate of what the eventual fate of the Spanish conflict may be is the condition of propaganda on the two sides.

On Franco's side there is virtually none. Franco's side is national and the Spanish national temper does not lend itself to this form of commercialized falsehood. Such facts as have been put forth in foreign magazines,

and occasionally in the foreign daily press, to support Franco's cause and that of the traditionally Christian Spain which he is defending have been from non-Spaniards, of whom I think the most effective has been Mr. Douglas Jerrold. On the other side propaganda may be described as the main weapon. It is used with all the well-known tricks of that trade, and used, as the Americans say, "to capacity." Franco had with him in his first efforts a considerable contingent of Moroccan troops—just as we attempted to use Indian troops during the Great War and the French actually did use African troops, Mahomedan and negro. The presence of these non-European elements on the insurgent side has been advertised by the Reds for all it is worth. Great bodies of opinion in England and America still think of the Spanish war as being a crushing of free men by an armed despot who uses black savages for his main instrument. In the same way the reinforcement of Franco's side by a small number of foreigners was shouted all day long through a hundred organs, while the much larger reinforcements of the revolutionaries was left unmentioned. Now and then we get a test case, as in the murder of Miss Boland, a Catholic Irish lady, by the Reds just as they were leaving Bilbao. This lady was born a British subject and remained one by international law. She was possessed of a British passport. Yet the incident passed almost unnoticed—especially in England.

In so far as propaganda can win a war the Reds hold all the trumps.

This is only natural, considering the motive power

behind the revolutionaries which works everywhere by the suppression of truth on the one side and propagation of falsehood on the other. During a long visit to the United States in this summer of 1937 I found the effects of the propaganda everywhere formidable and in many places supreme. The presence of Moses Rosenberg, the Russian Jew, as chief organizer of the Reds (he absurdly calls himself "Marcel" Rosenberg), I found had not been heard of in New York and none of the main newspapers would mention it. Happily propaganda pushed beyond a certain point defeats its own object, and the Moscow Communists here, as in every case public and private, under-estimate the intelligence of what the Germans call "Aryans" and what you and I know as "you and me." If you lie too prodigiously you arouse suspicion, and it looks as though that had already begun in the case of those who direct the exceedingly un-Spanish Red propaganda from Spain.

What the upshot of this critical struggle in the Spanish field may be certainly no one can tell at the moment in which these words are written (August 1937), but as certainly anyone may confidently affirm that on that upshot will depend, more than upon anything else, the future of Communism in Western Europe.

Next let me take the proscription of Jews in Germany.

The Nazi policy at Berlin in so far as it affects the Jewish question has one main interest apart from its merely dramatic interest of surprise or sensation. That interest is this: what effect will it have upon a solution of the Jewish question? Is it an advance towards a just solution of that question or not?

I do not mean "Is the Nazi action towards the Jews a just solution or not?" for it is not a solution at all. I mean rather "Will the effects proceeding from this sudden piece of radical reform make towards a final equitable result?"

There is no doubt that the Nazi attack was sincere. There is no doubt that *in the eyes of its authors* it was provoked by a situation which *they* thought intolerable.

But can it be fruitful?

Let us begin by remarking that this shock has cleared the air. That is the effect of most shocks. They get rid of humbug. It is perhaps their chief advantage, and often their only one. "The Germans," you will have heard it said, "have belled the cat. No one now is afraid to discuss the Jewish question as they used to be. That is all to the good." Yes, it is all to the good that free discussion should arise on a matter which had been under such an irrational taboo. It is indeed true that since the violent attack on the Jewish race by the Prussian Government through wholesale spoliation, the destruction of their professional careers in Germany, the extraordinary restrictions upon intercourse and, most extravagant of all, the declaration of Jewish blood up to and including the last generation but one—all these things have cleared the air. So for that matter would an attack by a Jewish State against a Christian or Mahomedan minority clear the air. Anything at once sudden, startling and violent, clears the air. But beyond that the Nazi policy has done very little. Those who support it in its own country talk extravagantly about it. They say, "We have conquered the Jews

and therefore we have won the Great War." These are the actual words they use. I am not exaggerating. They seem to think they have done something which is for all time and which will have the most prodigious results.

Now there are two criticisms to be made of this attitude. The first is that the attack made upon the Jews in Germany is neither thorough nor final. The second is that you will not achieve a victory until you have some moral consecration for it. A murder may have some lasting political result if you can ensure the continuance of its effect by the continued prosperity of the murderer. But injustice of this kind cannot solve any problem, and there is grave and glaring injustice in the Nazi policy against the Jews, for these two simple reasons, as familiar to Greek philosophy as to the Christian conscience: first, that justice concerns the individual soul, not a type or race. Secondly, that you cannot justly destroy a bilateral agreement by a unilateral declaration.

Let us look at the agreement, open or implied, between our civilization and the Jews everywhere, but particularly in the Prussianized German Reich, for it was there that this agreement had the fullest effect and that Jews most benefited by it. We Europeans had said to the Jews, "You are citizens like ourselves. You have made your arrangements for living under our code of laws, and that code guarantees you your possessions and your contracts." It is not immoral to declare a new policy and to say, "We will in future regard Jews as citizens of a different class from those

around them, their hosts ; they are in fact different and we propose in future to recognize that fact instead of carrying on with the fiction—for it is no better—that there is no difference between us." But when things of that kind are done, justice demands that the effect shall be gradual, and that the loser by any new regulation shall be compensated. We may make a law to-morrow to say that a foreigner shall not own English land in freehold : if we apply that law retrospectively without compensation, and deprive the foreigner of land which he has bought at his own sacrifice, we have committed theft.

Now that has gone on all over the field of Judao-German relations, and because these actions are grossly unjust, therefore immoral, they must inevitably carry with them retribution.

A citizen acts under a certain code of law. He exercises his civil rights and proposes to bring up his son in the profession of, say, medicine. He stints himself perhaps in his daily life in order to provide the money for the young man's training. The lad is trained, passes examinations, walks the hospitals, obtains a good degree, and launches out into his profession. After some years of practice he is successful, marries on the strength of it, and is established. Then out of the blue, you say to him, "Because you are a Jew, you shall no longer be allowed to carry on your profession." You ruin him by breaking a clear contract. You do so with no moral excuse.

It is exactly the same with any other of the professions, membership of which has suddenly been for-

bidden to Jews in the Reich. It is no answer to say that the proportion of Jews in these professions was excessive; it is no answer to say the Jew was a new arrival. "You made a contract with him, and you have broken it." There is no reply to that indictment. The main rules of justice are clear enough, and they have here been violated.

Most of my readers I fear will not accept the proposition that a violation of morals on a large scale carries with it retribution on a similar scale. They are short-sighted if they think thus, but daily experience, carrying no further than daily experience, is certainly on their side. Every day we see violations of justice going on around us which are followed by no evil consequence to the evil-doer. On the contrary, we see given him more wealth, or leisure, or *fame*, or standing, or some other good than he had before. Men are thereby tempted to deny the ultimate justice of God in temporal affairs. But what no one can deny is the missing of a mark. If your policy is unjust, it may or may not be followed by retribution, that is debatable; but if your policy is aimed at securing a certain result and it manifestly does not secure it, then the failure of your policy is not debatable. Now the Nazi attack upon such of the Jewish race as are subject to Berlin is, as I have said, not thorough, not final, but incomplete, and I think soon to prove abortive.

I say this apart from the fact that Israel is eternal, and Nazidom most certainly not eternal. The policy has missed its mark, on lower grounds: it has missed its

mark, because it has not dared to be thorough and has not had the competence to be well thought out.

Take two points, one by one, and see how the policy fails.

You can prevent marriage between a declared Jew, or a person of declared Jewish blood, and a person of other blood, or of supposedly other blood, but you cannot prevent affairs between the two, and you cannot even be certain in this particular case that the person of supposedly Jewish blood is really Jewish, or that the supposedly non-Jewish person has no Jewish blood in him which may reappear in another generation. The attempted prohibition is mechanical and that alone is sufficient to make it futile as applied to human affairs, for human affairs are essentially organic and non-mechanical, and, apart from that, it relies upon necessarily insufficient evidence. It may be said that a certain rough knowledge of the situation is sufficient, and if the mixture of races cannot be entirely prevented it may be largely checked, but it can be checked much less largely than the promoters of this policy seem to think.

Or, again, take the provision affecting the professions. You do not make it affect—probably you cannot make it affect—money dealing; and yet that profession of money dealing is the most important profession in the modern world. The official attack upon the Jews in the Reich has nowhere been more lopsided and glaringly ineffective than in its dealing with the big financial houses. The Nazis allow the influence of those houses to go on; they probably could not help allowing it;

but in allowing it they give away the whole of their position. It was the same with the multiple-shops and other big businesses which were in Jewish hands. The Nazis had not the will or the power to suppress them.

But perhaps the worst weakness of the whole attack upon the Jews in Germany is that it has no philosophy behind it, or at least no philosophy of general application and of ascertainable principle. Because an eccentric Frenchman of the name of Gobineau affirmed that the principal virtues derive from a certain stock which he called Germanic (and which, by the way, he found especially pure in the *Spanish* peasantry!), you cannot—even if this eccentric Frenchman were divinely inspired—make certain that the people living in Germany who did not happen to be Jews are of this peculiar and god-like sort. It is tomfoolery to pretend it. It is racial vanity gone mad. Now illusion in any form can be a restricted evil if it is not acted upon with logical thoroughness, but once you act on an illusion logically you pass the practical line between sanity and madness. If you cherish an illusion that you are the Emperor of China, and neither act upon that illusion nor draw rational deductions from it (such as that your wife is the Empress of China), there is no great harm done. Your excellent wife can be merciful to your foible, and yet when she is out of your presence cease to play the part of the Empress. But were you to act upon the illusion, condemn people to death on the strength of it and try to execute them, your illusion will go off the rails. Extravagance pushed beyond a certain point is unworkable, because it is mad.

Perhaps the two most practical considerations in connection with this department of our subject are: (1) How long the present German drive against the Jews can last, and (2) How widespread and profound will be the inevitable reactions against it outside Germany.

If you adopt an irrational attitude you are challenging the human race. You are at the best making yourself ridiculous and at the worst making yourself impossible. Further you are buying £1 for 30s. You are deliberately creating difficulties for yourself which you might have avoided and which far outweigh the advantages you hope to obtain. Let any man look at his own life, if it has been at all full, and ask himself what would have happened if he had gone out of his way to make every Jew of his private acquaintance an enemy. The ultimate suffering which he would have incurred is the image of what a race or a nation may suffer if it acts on similar irrational lines. I shall be saying in another connection that the taking up of the Jewish cause in Zionism against the whole world of Islam was in our own case a gratuitous piece of folly, but it is a folly more capable of remedy and presumably of restoration than the folly on the other extreme of challenging such a permanent factor in the general construction of our civilization as is formed by the Jews.

It is not as though the Jews in Germany had acted as enemies of the German people. Jewish Communism was hostile to the German race and to the somewhat exasperated nationalism of the Reich, because Jewish Communism is opposed to all national patriotisms except that of its authors. But Jewish Communism is not

identical with the Jewish race, still less with the individuals of that race. Berlin, by acting as she has done in this matter, has not made itself a rallying-point for all those who would restrict Jewish power, still less has it made itself a rallying-point for all those who would state the truth on the Jewish problem and discuss it reasonably. Berlin has not made itself a rallying-point even for anti-Communism, as it might well have done had it lucidly distinguished between the Jewish element in Communism and the Jewish race as a whole.

We look round and see that no one has copied the example of Berlin. Italy, which inaugurated the modern system of absolute government, has not done so. It has wisely used Jews of high talent to help it in the reconstruction of Italian affairs, and if it be said that this is because Italy was not provoked as Germany was by any great number of Jews on her territory, then what about Poland? Poland has a far larger proportion of Jews ~~than~~ the Reich. She has recently and with difficulty risen from the dead. She suffered horribly from the War—far more than the German Reich suffered. She might be excused indeed for losing her head over a problem which has gravely affected all nations, and particularly our own. Instead of that, she has gone to meet the Jews half-way and it has been greatly to her advantage.

Now let us turn to the third point, the present stage (and crisis) of Zionism. It is as important in its way as the other two, but it can be more briefly dealt with. It is the one most directly Jewish, though certainly not the most important. What stage has been reached

in this matter and what may be the possible development ?

The new factor in the affair since the last edition of this book in 1928, is the Arab insurrection of 1935-6.

The word "insurrection" sounds altogether too grand for the business. It was no more than the action of a few snipers, petty raids on Jewish plantations and a regrettable but not very large number of Jewish deaths; also, naturally, as the Arabs took the initiative, a certain number of Arab deaths. The thing as a whole was on quite a small scale.

The population was disarmed, as it is our necessary policy to disarm all populations subject to our rule, as the Irish were disarmed until the other day, and as millions of discontented subjects are disarmed all over the globe, whether under English, French, Italian, Russian or any other masters.

Why then was that insurrection, a thing on so very small a scale and so soon over, all important? Why did it mark a new departure? Because it illustrated the weakness of our whole position in Syria to-day, and particularly the threat which it involves. Most of what can be said on this subject has already been said in the pages of this book. All that can be added to it here is the important fact that our original policy, or rather lack of policy, has been followed up and we are now compelled to come to some decision after having characteristically postponed that decision as long as we could. So to act is the fruit of that spirit which is called by various phases and names: "compromise," "common sense," "we are not logical people," "mud-

dling through " and all the rest of the suicidal litany. There was a time when we could afford to talk rubbish, just as a rich young man in a secure home can afford to play the fool. That time has gone.

What Balfour had in mind when he offered Palestine to the Jews as part of the spoils in the course of the Great War, we all know. The man was an intense patriot, he understood the power of Jewish finance with which we were allied. He knew something, though not very much (and that in a confused way) of the then interwoven strands of Jewish racial feeling and German racial feeling. He was determined to put the former at the service of Great Britain, to which he was so passionately attached, and with which the Jews had worked for more than two hundred years. He of course did not understand, any more than the rest of the governing class to which he belonged, what was meant by the problem. If he blundered, one can at least say this: that the blunders of the governing class in this and other matters, are nothing to what they would have been if they had been made by those classes in England, which are so easily governed. Luckily these did not (as yet) interfere with foreign policy.*

* There are signs that this happy indifference of the English people to the measures of those who rule them is growing insecure. It was the fruit of long peace. The Great War and especially the tardy appearance of conscription changed all. Great sections of the people will now express themselves actively on some point in foreign policy where, before the war, they would have regarded themselves (rightly) as incompetent. They are so determined to avoid a new call to arms that they will actually interpose to enforce what they have been persuaded

Anyhow, to Arthur Balfour, when he made this offer to the Jews, the whole thing seemed quite suitable. The Jews would be very glad to get Palestine, and there was nothing to stop them. The Arabs did not count. As for the old Christian feeling about the place it was a silly superstition which had no strength save with certain backward and poorer elements of continental Europe, and possibly (by the way), with the Irish—another reason for despising it. That a Jew governing Golgotha might be a source of serious irritation to important opponents could never have crossed his mind.

To-day, after these very few years, even the most obtuse of his compeers understands that Jews holding Nazareth might prove a very serious irritant indeed in quite serious centres which are still, after a fashion, Christian. (I can imagine a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Annunciation losing its temper after the pilgrims had interviewed a local Jewish authority for permission to do so: strange, but true.) Until the Germans, or rather the peculiar government of Berlin, launched its attack against the Jewish nationals of the Reich, there was no very strong drive among non-Jews in Europe for continued Jewish immigration into Palestine save in Poland. The Polish government of course was all in

will ensure their repose. Great masses, beyond those of the suburbs, recently clamoured against and reversed our considered policy on Abyssinia, with the result that we have for the moment or forever lost the Bab-el-Mandeb, the gate of the Red Sea, and therefore the shorter road to India, which in future an enemy may control or a friend who will demand his price.

favour, because the more they could "run off" or "tap" the Jewish trouble in their own country and divert it into another, the better for them, seeing the enormous Jewish population with which Poland is burdened.

By the way, it is curious that those people who are always telling us that a Jewish minority is a source of wealth and power, do not apply that dictum to Poland. It is stranger still that those who tell us that justice to Jews is always rewarded at once by Heaven, never emphasize the special care the Poles have taken to give their Jewish subjects privilege.

When the government at Berlin began, in violent, dramatic fashion, its attack on the Jewish people, everyone who differed from the government of Berlin (and that, they will be sorry to hear, covers the vast majority of what they themselves call "Aryans"), became much more inclined than they had been before, to defend the Jewish thesis. "We used to think," they said, "that the Jews had no great grievance, for, though it is true they have no country of their own, yet they were not badly treated by their hosts, but, if anything, a little too well treated—especially in Germany. But now we see how unjustly Jews are made to suffer."

For there had come that startling thing—it was a thunderbolt—the moral declaration of war by the triumphant Nazis upon the Jews who had the misfortune to be the subjects of Berlin. After that the old argument broke down. The opponent to Zionism could no longer say, "What do Jews need with a national home?" Every German Jew could answer, and every honest man as well: "We now quite understand the need for

some place where Jews may be guaranteed to live at peace without encroaching upon their neighbours."

But in that last phrase comes the whole crux of the affair :—" without encroaching upon their neighbours." It is true that the Jewish immigration into Palestine bought at very high prices the land on which it settled ; it is further true that it developed the value of that land immensely, not merely by the pressure of millions of money, but by the exercise of organizing power and of industry. It is true, as the Zionist complains, that he took nothing from Palestine, but hugely added to what he had found there.

Unfortunately the point is not an economical one, but a spiritual one. Islam hates and despises the Jew, and what we were doing in Palestine was to thrust an increasing body of Jews under the protection of British power, into the flesh of Islam. It was a challenge to that feeling which Islam has for the Holy Places. It was a challenge to that feeling within the very territory which was historically the heart of Islam, for though Islam came from the sands to the South, it was first planted in Syria ; and Damascus is the heart of its legend, tradition and home.

Now, at that word " Damascus " it is well that we should pause. No English journal to my knowledge, and certainly no English politician, has told people what Damascus means. Damascus is Syria and Syria is Damascus. Pompey knew that, and all the successful masters of Antioch even, before him. You cannot rule Syria against the will of Damascus ; you can always rule Syria with the support of Damascus. Had the Crusaders

seized Damascus and held it with a sufficient garrison, Europe would have been in the midst of Islam long since, and Islam would have withered. The retirement (the inevitable retirement) of the combined French and German forces from before Damascus in 1148 was the doom of the Crusades and the source of Saladin's triumph: Islam ousting the West.

Now, England does not hold Damascus, and does not seem likely to hold it. Nor is it to be presumed that the French will be there much longer. Yet unless you hold Damascus how can you permanently support an alien hated and despised Jewish colony in a corner of Syria? Can anything in the near future render the possession of the Palestinian sea-board by the Jews a thing of such value to England that she would be willing to risk all the Orient for that one anomalous position—which is not even a possession?

Attempts have indeed been made to prove in some tortuous fashion that the holding of the coast between Acre and Telaviv was the holding of a "key" to India. It is lamentable nonsense. Palestine has no strategical value to us whatsoever. It has an indefensible land frontier which is geographically and strategically a part of Syria in general. Haifa as a British port has an obvious and very great strategical value, or rather will have such when it has been fortified, but then so will have any other point on the coast where in future a modern harbour may be formed. Tripoli and Beyruth are obvious examples. Even if Palestine were held, or part of Palestine were held, as a British colony with inhabitants among them from this country, it would be

a weakness—a debit, not an asset. Palestine held, not for ourselves but for somebody else who is no strength to us and owes us no allegiance, is not only a debit but a constant peril. To this it will be answered "The thing has been done. It cannot be undone. What then should we advise?"

If we cut our losses by abandoning the Jews to their fate, they will certainly be destroyed by the surrounding power of Islam. Perhaps the only solution for the moment is the present state of things, arranged as best it can be arranged to our future advantage. Perhaps we can carry on for some few years at least, even for many years, gratuitously defending an alien immigrant population against the millions of Mohammedans, though obviously we could never do so on condition of preventing any further extension of Jewish power in those parts.

The compromise suggested by the British government in this summer of 1937, can have no finality about it. But there is a certain precarious equilibrium for the moment in the existing presence of a large protected Jewish minority on Syrian soil. We can count for the moment on the support of the Arab state immediately to the east, across the Jordan, because its ruler hopes that the present arrangement will increase his wealth and power and the number of his subjects. We are for the moment not threatened by any other European power. The French so long as they remain in chaos may be neglected, the Italians are not established within close striking distance. But the thing remains unsettled and a full immediate solution of the problem remains impossible.

The truth is, as everybody knows, that we promised the Arabs their country if they would help us against the Turks. We then broke our promise. As a rule, to break your promise is an advantage in this world ; in this case it seems to have turned out the other way, and all we can do is to shoulder the consequences of the error or falsehood or betrayal, whichever you like to call it, and carry on from day to day and from hand to mouth.

Those who made the promise now assure us, a score of years later, that they made a " mental reservation " excluding Palestine, but the interval between the act and its explanation is singularly broad, and " mental reservations " are suspect especially when the other party never heard of them.

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Such, as it seems to me, is the standing of the triple problem in its Revolutionary, German and Zionist aspects at the moment of writing.

H. BELLOC.

KING'S LAND,

August, 1937.

